

AINSWORTH UNIT TITLE TRANSFER TECHNICAL SCOPING MEETING

Ainsworth, Nebraska – Ainsworth Conference Center

The Bureau of Reclamation hosted a technical meeting on May 8, 2003, concerning the potential title transfer of the Ainsworth Unit from federal ownership to the Ainsworth Irrigation District. Listed below are comments from the meeting participants:

- **Who will retain liability on the dam?**
- **Has there been a precedent on land that is condemned being sold back into private ownership?**
- **On a given year how much \$\$ is the Bureau of Reclamation providing the Ainsworth Irrigation District for improvements (canals, laterals), general O & M (labor)? If title transfers, will this funding end?**
- **Will there be any changes in reservoir management of releases or water levels in regards to down stream recreational needs and fish and wildlife management, including T & E species?**
- **Will the transfer affect any other Bureau of Reclamation properties downstream, or only around Merritt Reservoir?**
- **Who would be in charge of safety issues after transfer? Who would be responsible for a major event that could occur, such as flooding, etc.?**
- **What are the Bureau of Reclamation's responsibilities and commitments to the project now?**
- **What are the potential impacts of the written comments submitted by Nebraska Game and Parks Commission?**
- **Will the extra (30?) center pivots that will be going in have any effect on the Ogallala Aquifer? Are they going to rely more on groundwater than irrigation water from Merritt?**
- **If title transfer happens will there be language that holds the Ainsworth Irrigation District to acres they have now or will they be able to add acres?**
- **How will water rights be affected on Snake River and above and below Merritt? How will they be allocated to the Ains worth Irrigation District?**

- **If hydropower becomes a component, how will that be managed in regard to water levels?**
- **High water levels have caused stream bank erosion. How will those problems be handled?**
- **Will title transfer affect the camping at Merritt?**
- **Who will be responsible for collecting water quality and quantity in the reservoir and directly down stream?**
- **How will title transfer benefit the Ainsworth irrigation District and its users? What are those benefits?**
- **Is there an interactive opportunity on the Bureau of Reclamation's website?**
- **Can the current conservation easement that the Bureau of Reclamation has with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission be grandfathered into the title transfer?**
- **Is there a minimum pool to build or maintain a fishery?**

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